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C O N F I D E N T I A L YEREVAN 000353

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/10/2016
TAGS: [KNNP](#) [ENRG](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [IR](#) [RS](#) [AM](#)
SUBJECT: ARMENIA: DIFFICULT TO EXCLUDE IRAN FROM NUCLEAR
CONFERENCE

REF: A) STATE 31059 B) YEREVAN 295 C) YEREVAN 281 D)
YEREVAN 213

Classified By: Amb. John M. Evans for reasons 1.4 (b, d).

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) Armenia seeks a face-saving way to support our request to exclude Iran from an upcoming Forum of State Nuclear Safety Authorities of the Countries Operating VVER-type Reactors. Armenian Nuclear Regulatory Authority (ANRA) Chairman Ashot Martirosyan told us the MFA will convene a meeting to discuss GOAM options. Armenia is hosting the 12th annual meeting of the forum which Martirosyan is charged with organizing. The fact that the GOAM plans to discuss our points is encouraging, but given Iran's growing importance as an alternative supplier of energy, we are not certain they will find a way out. End Summary.

MFA TO ANRA: "FIND AN EXCUSE" TO EXCLUDE IRAN

¶2. (C) Armenian Nuclear Regulatory Authority (ANRA) Chairman Ashot Martirosyan told us March 10 that Deputy Foreign Minister Arman Kirakossian and Deputy Minister of Energy Areg Galstyan had instructed him to "find an excuse" to exclude Iranian participants from the June 27 to 29 VVER Regulators Group forum (ref A). Kirakossian issued the guidance, he said, in response to U.S. opposition to Iranian participation in the VVER Regulators Group and "Ambassador Evans' interventions" over the past few weeks (ref B).

GOAM TO DISCUSS OPTIONS DURING MARCH 13 MEETING

¶3. (C) Martirosyan, the GOAM's designated "host and forum chairman," told us he had been summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to "discuss options" for withdrawing an invitation for Iran to participate in the forum as an observer. The meeting, which will include Kirakossian, Galstyan and MFA Arms control and International Security Advisor Vartuhi Asaturian, is scheduled for March 13.

USG DOES NOT WELCOME IRAN'S PARTICIPATION IN YEREVAN FORUM

¶4. (C) We again delivered ref A points, noting that we request Armenia, as Chair of the Association, decline Iran's

request to apply for Association membership. We also emphasized the USG remains opposed to Iran participation as an observer. Martirosyan told us that association members had agreed to invite Iran to participate in the meeting well in advance of Armenia's chairmanship, placing the GOAM in a difficult position. (Note: This is the same point Kirakossian raised with us in reftels. End Note).

COMMENT: DEMARCHE MAY FORCE ARMENIA'S HAND

15. (C) While we are encouraged by the MFA's decision to explore options for withdrawing Iran's invitation to participate in the Yerevan forum, we do not expect immediate results from the March 13 meeting. The GOAM will not lead the charge against Iran's membership. We believe, however, that active lobbying by other member states, and continued pressure from us, may provide the GOAM some political cover, and pressure, to support our position.

EVANS